

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2357

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA IMMEDIATE

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PLEASE PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

MONROVIA FOR AMBASSADOR SHIRLEY TEMPLE BLACK

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.) GH

SUBJ: LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT FROM GENERAL ACHEAMPONG

REF: ACCRA 3251

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER FROM GHANA HEAD OF STATE, GENERAL
ACHEAMPONG TO THE PRESIDENT:

QUOTE: DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

I MUST THANK YOU VERY SINCERELY FOR YOUR LETTER OF 22ND APRIL,
1976, STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE THEN PROJECTED VISIT OF
DR. KISSINGER, YOUR SECRETARY OF STATE, TO GHANA AND OTHER
AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

I HAD VERY MUCH LOOKED FORWARD TO THIS VISIT FIRST BECAUSE OF THE
UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY IT PRESENTED FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF OUR
BILATERAL RELATIONS AND ALSO FOR THE CLARIFICATION OF THE
VIEWS OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES, WHICH HAD DIFFERED ON OCCASIONS,
ON THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. YOUR LETTER HAD INTRIGUED
ME VERY MUCH BECAUSE OF YOUR INTIMATION THAT THE VISIT OF THE
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SECRETARY OF STATE WOULD MARK A NEW DEPARTURE IN THE AFRICAN

POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES. YOUR REQUEST THAT I GIVE (SIC) COUNSEL AND ADVICE TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS WAS ONE THAT I HAD INTENDED TO HONOUR TO THE FULL.

IT IS THEREFORE TO ME PERSONALLY A MOST DISAPPOINTING OCCURRENCE THAT I SHOULD IN THE VERY WEEK OF THE IMPENDING VISIT BE FORCED BY ILLNESS TO PUT OFF ALL ENGAGEMENTS. DESPITE THIS FACT, I WAS HOPING THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THE VISIT TO GO ON IN THE EXPECTATION THAT I WOULD BE STRONG ENOUGH BY THE TIME THE SECRETARY OF STATE ARRIVED TO RECEIVE HIM PERSONALLY. UNFORTUNATELY, MY SITUATION WORSENEED SOMEHOW AND ON THE 27TH OF APRIL, IT BECAME OBVIOUS TO ME THAT MY EXPECTATIONS REGARDING MY HEALTH WERE MISPLACED. YOUR AMBASSADOR, MR. PRESIDENT, CANNOT DENY THE FACT THAT I HAVE NOT BEEN TO THE OFFICE SINCE THE EASTER HOLIDAYS.

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE TO LET THE VISIT GO ON ALL THE SAME SO THAT THE SECRETARY OF STATE COULD BE RECEIVED AND DISCUSSIONS HELD WITH HIM AT A LOWER BUT APPROPRIATE LEVEL. DISAPPOINTING THOUGH THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN TO ME PERSONALLY, I HAD BEEN PREPARED TO LET THE VISIT GO ON UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.

SINCE THE TIME THE VISIT TO GHANA BY DR. KISSINGER WAS ANNOUNCED, HOWEVER, THERE HAD BEEN MOUNTING PROTESTS IN OUR NEWSPAPERS AND WE HAD CONTINUED TO RECEIVE INDICATIONS OF POSSIBLE PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND DISRUPTION OF PUBLIC ORDER. IT WAS FOR THESE REASONS THAT MY GOVERNMENT HAD NOT ITSELF ANNOUNCED THE ACTUAL DATE OF THE VISIT AND THE PROGRAMME THAT HAD BEEN DRAWN UP BUT WAS WAITING FOR THE LAST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE THEM PUBLIC. WE WERE CONVINCED THAT WE COULD CONTAIN SUCH PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS EVEN THOUGH THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN EMBARRASSING TO BOTH OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS AND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE. BY LATE MORNING OF THE 27TH OF APRIL, HOWEVER, I RECEIVED A REPORT ON THE SECURITY SITUATION CONNECTED WITH THE VISIT WHICH INDICATED RAPID DETERIORATION AND WHICH CONVINCED ME THAT IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE SECURITY OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ORDER DURING HIS VISIT, STRONG DETACHMENTS OF RIOT POLICE AND OTHER SECURITY PERSONNEL WOULD HAVE HAD TO BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BROUGHT IN FROM THE REGIONS TO REINFORCE THE CONTINGENTS IN ACCRA. THE TIME WAS TOO SHORT TO TAKE ANY SUCH ACTION. MY PRESENCE ON THE SCENE WOULD HAVE CERTAINLY REMOVED ANY POSSIBLE EMBARRASSMENT TO OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS, BUT I WAS NOT AROUND. THE RATHER GRIM IMPRESSION THAT ANY INCIDENTS MIGHT HAVE GIVEN TO THE VISIT WAS ONE I FELT COULD NOT BE JUSTIFIED.

IT WAS THIS COMBINATION OF, FIRSTLY, MY OWN INABILITY TO

RECEIVE THE SECRETARY OF STATE PERSONALLY BECAUSE I WAS
INDISPOSED, AND TO HONOUR YOU THROUGH HIM IN THE LIGHT OF THE
CONTENTS OF YOUR LETTER; AND, SECONDLY, THE VEXED SECURITY
SITUATION WHICH BECAUSE OF MY ABSENCE FROM THE SCENE POSED
A SERIOUS PROBLEM THAT DICTATED THE MOST REGRETTABLE
DECISION TO CALL OFF THE VISIT.

MR. PRESIDENT, YOU SHOULD BE MORE AWARE THAN ANY OTHER, THAT
THE GOVERNMENT OF GHANA CANNOT BE SUBJECTED TO PRESSURES FROM
ANY FOREIGN QUARTER, AND WERE THIS EVEN POSSIBLE, THE BILATERAL
RELATIONS BETWEEN GHANA AND THE UNITED STATES ARE SUCH THAT
WE WOULD NOT COUNTENANCE INTERFERENCE BY ANY THIRD STATE. THE
SPECULATIONS THAT PRESSURES FROM FOREIGN SOURCES WERE EITHER
THE MAIN REASONS OR FORMED PART OF THE REASONS FOR THE CANCELLAT-
ION OF THE GHANA VISIT ARE TOTALLY UNFOUNDED.

BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY THAT THE DECISION TO CANCEL THE VISIT
WAS NOT TAKEN LIGHTLY AND THAT IT WAS ONE OF OFFICIAL ACTIONS
THAT I HAVE TAKEN WITH GREAT RELUCTANCE. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE
IT TO BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF GHANA-AMERICAN RELATIONS FOR
SUCH A DECISION TO BE TAKEN, HOWEVER DISTASTEFUL IT WAS TO ME
PERSONALLY AND MY COLLEAGUES IN THE GOVERNMENT OF GHANA.

I KNOW THE GREAT EFFORTS WHICH YOUR ABLE AND HARD-WORKING
AMBASSADOR TO GHANA, MRS. SHIRLEY TEMPLE BLACK, WHOSE PRESENCE
IN GHANA I PERSONALLY, AND ALL MY COLLEAGUES OF THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL VALUED (SIC) VERY MUCH,
HAD MADE TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE VISIT OF THE SECRETARY
OF STATE. I COULD THEREFORE IMAGINE HER PERSONAL DISAPPOINTMENT
AT THE SUDDEN TURN OF EVENTS AND I WOULD HAVE VERY MUCH
WISHED TO BE ABLE TO TALK TO HER PERSONALLY AND EXPLAIN THE
CIRCUMSTANCES. AS I HAVE LEARNED THAT SHE HAS ALREADY LEFT
FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH HER GOVERNMENT, I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL
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IF MY REASSURANCES COULD BE CONVEYED TO HER. I PERSONALLY
LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING HER SOON IN GHANA WHERE SHE IS ALWAYS
SURE OF A WARM WELCOME.

I HAVE INSTRUCTED MY AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES, HIS
EXCELLENCY MR. S.E. QUARM, WHO HAD BEEN CALLED HOME TO ASSIST
WITH THE ARRANGEMENTS OF THE VISIT, TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON
IMMEDIATELY AND TO PERSONALLY HAND OVER THIS LETTER TO YOU
AND CONVEY MY HIGHEST PERSONAL REGARDS AND DEEPEST REGRETS
FOR ANY INCONVENIENCE AND EMBARRASSMENT THAT THE
CANCELLATION OF THE VISIT HAS CAUSED TO YOU PERSONALLY,
THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

WITH SENTIMENTS OF MY HIGHEST ESTEEM.

SINCERELY,

(SIGNED)

GENERAL I.K. ACHEAMPONG
HEAD OF STATE AND CHAIRMAN OF
THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL

30TH APRIL 1976.

UNQUOTE.
LINEHAN

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